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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LIMA 002376

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR INL/LP, WHA/AND, DS/IP/WHA, DS/DSS/ITA; DEPT FOR  
ONDCP FOR D GETTINGS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [EAID](#) [ETRD](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PE](#)

SUBJECT: MORE COCALERO INFIGHTING; BOMBS SIGNAL  
RADICALIZATION

REF: A) LIMA 1418

B) LIMA 1062

C) 03 LIMA 5254

1. (U) SUMMARY: Monzon cocaleros' highly publicized rejection of Huallaga cocalero leader Nancy Obregon (for allegedly being too conciliatory to the GOP) is a parable for the fact that continued cocalero fragmentation is going hand-in-hand with a new radicalization. There are other disturbing signs of radical and violent trends in the areas where coca eradication or alternative development is ongoing or planned. Credible threats have resurfaced against Alternative Development (AD) projects, and there have been several recent explosions near GOP or NGO facilities. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) Tocache (San Martin Department) cocalero leader Nancy Obregon appeared on 5/12 in the town of Monzon, Huanuco Department to speak before farmers that had mobilized against the proposed U.S./Peru Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Despite Obregon's past popularity with cocaleros, the crowd booed and pelted her with projectiles.

3. (U) Extensive press coverage suggested that Obregon's recent tribulations were a sign of increasing cocalero radicalization. Iburico Morales labeled Obregon a traitor because of her past statements that gradual eradication of illegal coca was appropriate. (Note: Despite such statements, Obregon has persistently and loudly said that AD is and has been a failure. She has been one of the cocaleros falsely claiming that the U.S. was fumigating coca - see Ref B. End Note.)

4. (U) While cocaleros pelted Obregon, Tingo Maria cocalero leader Elsa Malpartida, in a seminar entitled "Coca Zones: Challenges and Alternatives" organized by a local university, claimed that there was unity among the cocalero movements. Reportedly licit growers of potatoes and other crops as well as coca farmers attended the seminar. Malpartida then traveled to the Tingo Maria airport on 5/17 with lawyers and press in tow, claiming that the U.S.-owned Thrush aircraft was fumigating coca fields (Septel).

5. (U) Press articles reported the continuing cocalero divisions while warning that the real threat of radicalization is from the increasingly violent plans by cocaleros, allied with narcotraffickers and Sendero Luminoso (SL), to defend coca fields. The local media continues to ask cocaleros hard questions. Morales tried to negate his image as a radical allied with narcotraffickers by announcing on 5/19 that his Monzon cocaleros would initiate a strike (road blockage) against transporters of precursor chemicals (Note: used to make cocaine base and toxic to the environment. End Note.) When leading daily "El Comercio" reporter asked him to name names, Morales refused and said it was the government's fault that the chemicals were reaching his valley.

6. (U) Cocalero groups in the Huallaga and VRAE areas keep trying to unite without much success. Tocache cocaleros announced a strike (road blockage) for 6/27, hoping for cocaleros in other areas to follow suit. Such efforts have by and large failed in the past (Refs A and B). Iburico Morales announced on 5/21 that his Monzon growers would not participate in the 6/27 strike. San Francisco (VRAE) cocaleros announced an international coca festival for August; it is not yet clear who plans to attend.

7. (SBU) Several unexplained explosions in and around Tingo Maria once again suggest radicalization of the cocalero movement and a link to SL. During the 25th Anniversary week of SL's armed "struggle," the distribution of pro-Sendero pamphlets and the SL's trademark red swatches throughout Tingo Maria and Aucuyacu towns preceded the explosions. In Aucuyacu one explosion targeted a USAID-funded NGO that is not directly related to the Alternative Development Program (ADP) and another targeted a sub-contractor to USAID's primary ADP contractor. A third explosion took place in Tingo Maria on the street where the Regional Director of the

GOP's counterdrug agency (DEVIDA) resides. The worsening security situation has caused USAID's ADP to evacuate its regional offices in Tingo Maria several times since January 11.

18. (SBU) COMMENT: The fight between Monzon cocalero leader Morales and Tocache cocalero leader Obregon is less about substance than power. Since the arrest of Nelson Palomino (Ref C), whose leadership was generally respected and accepted by all the coca federations, regional cocalero leaders have been unwilling to play second fiddle to anyone else. (No doubt old-fashioned sexism plays a role in this, given that two of three main contenders are women.)

19. (SBU) For all of that, the reason Morales cited for running Obregon out of town under a hail of rocks is significant: that she had once tacitly endorsed the position that illegal coca could be eradicated in a "gradual and consensual fashion." As much as Obregon denies it, she and some other cocaleros did toy with this position three years ago - and why not, given that it gave them ample opportunity to delay eradication. Obregon has long since, however, moved to a hard line position that is virtually indistinguishable from that of Morales. This vignette thus serves as an allegory for the extent to which the cocaleros have hardened their position despite continuing regional divisions.

110. (SBU) The apparent bomb blasts are further evidence of radicalization, and the Mission will continue to reevaluate security for AD workers. This radicalization is making coca eradication - both voluntary and programmed - ever more challenging throughout the coca zones. In 2005 alone, USAID's AD implementer has had to suspend work in its four regional offices for 54 days due to security threats. The Monzon attempt to rally cocaleros with licit farmers against the FTA would be troubling if it had been more successful or replicated elsewhere. Morales' attempt to distance himself from narcotraffickers is a smokescreen in an area where narcotrafficker money dominates local politics and economic activity. Media coverage of late has been generally constructive, and the Mission will continue working with the press to get the real stories told. As eradication efforts get under way in the hard-core areas, we expect desperate moves by cocaleros and will prepare accordingly. END COMMENT.  
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